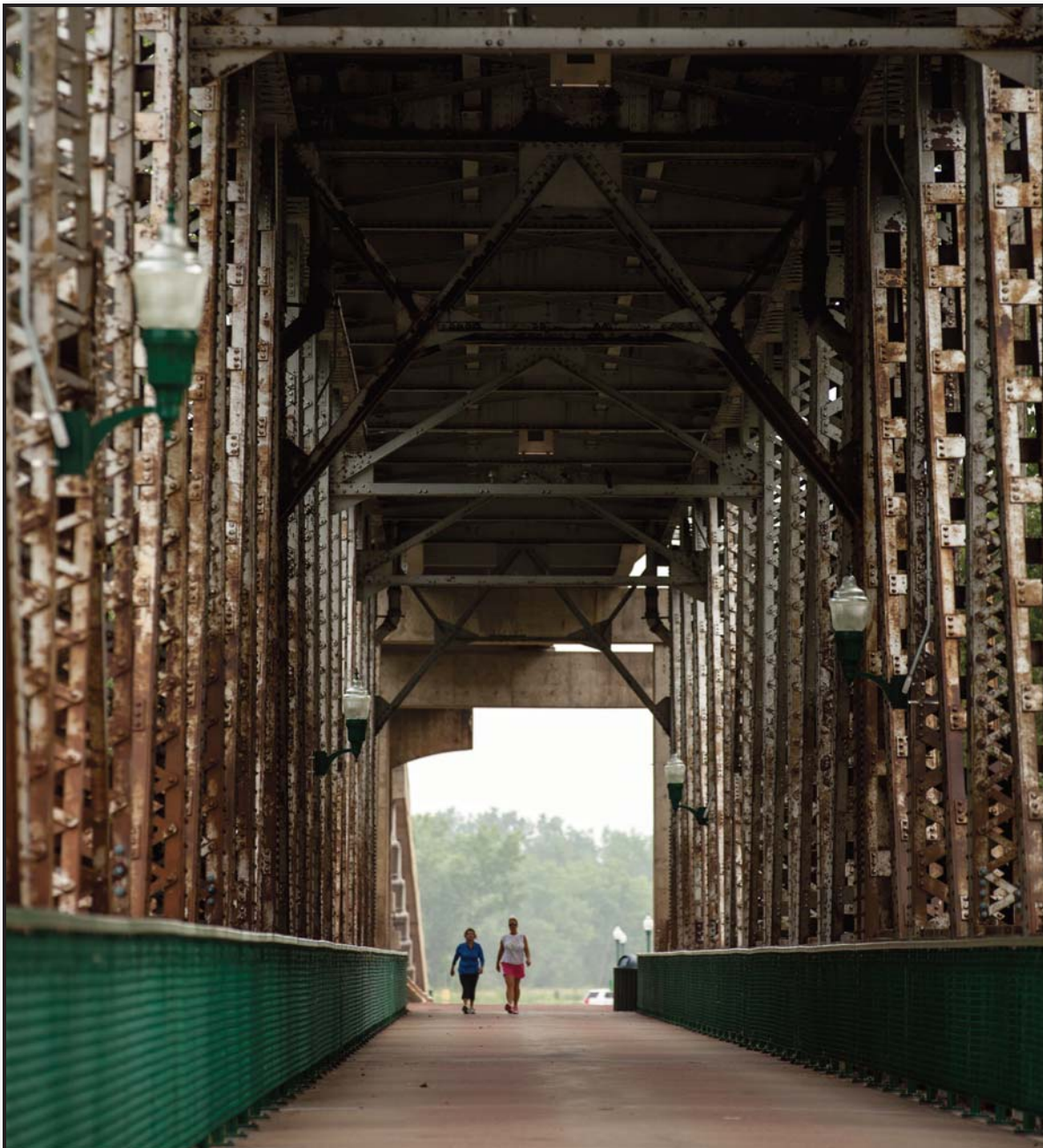


the ROADRUNNER

Nebraska ♦ Department ♦ of ♦ Roads

August/September 2015



Crossing Over

Photo by Dan Luedert

Hikers take a stroll from Cedar County, Nebraska to Yankton, South Dakota via the Meridian Bridge. The historic Meridian Highway Bridge was converted to a pedestrian bridge in 2011 after completion of the Discovery Bridge in 2008. (See story on page 6)

the Roadrunner

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The information in this newsletter is contributed
by employees, retirees and friends of NDOR.



From the Director

Working with Our Transportation Partners



Kyle Schneweis

Since early June, I have traveled over 2,000 miles of Nebraska highways and met with hundreds of NDOR employees and stakeholders. I have learned that much like the state itself, the challenges we face are big and diverse.

We at NDOR are tasked with continuing to maintain a massive infrastructure system that has historically served the state very well, while simultaneously advancing the system to improve safety and maximize economic growth. Accomplishing these feats will require that we

work closely with all of our partners – local government officials, civic and business leaders, industry partners and economic development professionals. Each of these groups bring important resources and perspectives that can improve our understanding of how our transportation system serves the citizens and businesses of Nebraska.

The good news is we already have strong relationships to build upon, and many new people who want to join the conversation. Our challenge will be to thoughtfully consider the input we receive so that it might better inform our decision-making here at NDOR. This type of collaboration will become even more important as we explore less familiar areas, such as the economic impacts of our transportation investments and innovative funding, finance and project delivery. We need to look at these issues from all sides before we can decide which ideas make the most sense here in Nebraska, and our partners can help us to do that.

As we move forward, I challenge you to demonstrate to your stakeholders that you're listening and actively considering their suggestions. That doesn't mean you have to do everything your partners ask, but it does mean you should work with them to find the best solutions. We have a lot of challenges ahead, but I'm confident we have a better chance of meeting them if we pledge to work closely with our transportation partners. ♦



IMPROVEMENT Coming Soon!

Nebraska's Surface Transportation Program Announced for FY-2016

The Nebraska Department of Roads' (NDOR) Director, Kyle Schneeweis, released the fiscal year 2016 Surface Transportation Program. This publication details how the department plans to use the taxpayers' highway user dollars to provide the best state highway system possible for all Nebraskans and the traveling public.

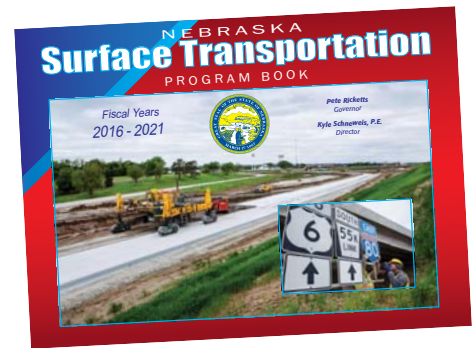
The 2016 State Highway System Program is published at \$505 million and is funded from state and federal highway user taxes and fees. The Local System Program for city streets and county roads totals \$334 million and is funded with state, federal and local highway user revenues.

One hundred and ten projects will be let to contract on the State Highway System during fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016). Projects throughout the state

will range in size and scope from small intersection improvements involving lighting and traffic signals to pavement and bridge preservation projects to large resurfacing and reconstruction projects.

Some of the larger projects include 11.6 miles of roadway widening, asphalt resurfacing and bridge repair east of Farnam on N-23 in Frontier County and 10.6 miles of roadway widening, asphalt resurfacing and bridge repair on N-11 north of Burwell in Garfield County. In Keith County, 11.5 miles of US-30 will be resurfaced with concrete and in Merrick County, US 30 and N-14 in Central City will be reconstructed with concrete and 4.2 miles of N-14 south of the city will be resurfaced with asphalt.

Funds from The Build Nebraska Act will be put to use on reconstruction of



a new interchange southeast of Nebraska City, completion of the four-lane expressway between Plattsmouth and Bellevue, construction of a four-lane expressway on US-30 between Schuyler and Rogers and four-lane reconstruction of the Heartland Expressway south of Alliance.

Major projects on Interstate 80 include replacing 9.2 miles of concrete pavement between Lodgepole and Chappell in Cheyenne and Deuel Counties, and replacing another 7.8 miles west of the South Platte River in Deuel County.

The 2016-2021 Nebraska Surface Transportation Program is available at www.transportation.nebraska.gov/hwy-pgm. ♦

U.S. Transportation Chief Visits Lincoln, Promotes Highway Bill

From a location overlooking the future site of Nebraska's first diverging diamond interchange, on I-80 at Northwest 48th Street in Lincoln, U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx told Nebraskans during his visit on August 12 that he was here to listen and "to let the transportation community know that we've still got a fight on our hands" regarding passing a six-year highway bill.

Foxx shared his views as a guest of U.S. Senator Deb Fischer, as they are pushing lawmakers to work together on a long-term highway bill when Congress returns to Washington in September. The \$350 billion bill the Senate passed in July would fund federal highway and infrastructure projects for three years and give senators until 2018 to determine how to pay for the full six years.

Standing on the parking lot of Frontier Harley-Davidson, Foxx praised Nebraskans for projects such as the diverging diamond interchange and widening I-80 to six lanes from Omaha to west of Lincoln, adding, "We need to be executing more projects like this." He noted that getting the six-year highway bill passed "is a very big deal, and I want Nebraskans to know that. I want Americans to know that."



U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx stands next to U.S. Senator from Nebraska Deb Fischer at the podium.

Public Involvement Section Focuses on Balanced, Consistent Approach

By Communication Division Staff

The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) is a public agency whose mission is to provide the best possible statewide transportation system for the movement of people and goods.

The Public Involvement Section of NDOR's Communication Division is responsible for both informing and obtaining input from the public and stakeholders who influence transportation decisions that will affect their lives and those of future generations. NDOR views effective public involvement as critical to ensuring that the state's transportation system continues to serve a wide range of needs.

Recently, through coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), NDOR

developed a public involvement procedure that provides guidelines, techniques and processes that will assist the department and local governments in soliciting information from stakeholders and the public. This will enhance the agency's performance and accountability through continuous improvement in communication, coordination, cooperation and collaboration.

A strong partnership with the general public, tribal governments, metropolitan planning organizations, universities, local governments, and other state and federal government agencies is the goal. Even with long-range planning and strategic engineering as the standard, we still need to hear the needs of the public *from* the public. Listening to the people helps NDOR determine what

constitutes the best possible, most effective transportation system.

State and Federal Guidelines

The Public Involvement Section's job is to ensure that all project delivery techniques are in compliance with state and federal guidelines. Federal laws and regulations require public involvement during the transportation planning development and decision-making process. In addition, these laws and policies include Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

Public Involvement staffers work regularly with Chris Hassler, NDOR Highway Civil Rights Specialist in the Human Resources Division, to ensure that public involvement is tailored to maximize opportunities
(see Public Involvement on next page)



Public involvement team members inform and receive input from stakeholders, public and community leaders during a recent public information meeting.

Public Involvement *(cont'd. from page 4)*

for participation by minority, low-income and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) persons. This is a critical part of complying with NEPA regulations.

Key Elements

NDOR consists of fourteen divisions and eight districts that manage the transportation system throughout Nebraska. Public participation is a key element when planning for and developing an efficient transportation system for Nebraskans. Public involvement touches almost everyone at NDOR, along with cities and counties in Nebraska, at some point during project delivery and construction. Also, the Nebraska State Highway Commission, created to insure citizen input in the planning, design and administration of the highway system, assists and serves as citizen liaisons between the public and the NDOR.

Behind the Scenes

The Public Involvement Section includes Manager Sarah Kugler; Public Involvement Officer Tony Bui; Public Involvement Specialist Grace Erickson; and Media Center Research Specialist Denise Matulka. The team's work entails much more than just setting up meetings or preparing for hearings. Each member realizes the importance of the public involvement process and understands how personal relationships can make a difference. The team works behind the scenes to gather project information and verifies its accuracy for use in preparing draft materials. Public Involvement Section personnel carefully review a highway project location and identify landowners adjacent to the project, as well as representatives from the city, county, state and federal entities who could have special interest in the project. Public involvement team members identify impacts and determine how they can be communicated to the public. They prepare and organize

a timeline of essential events in order to deliver the project in an efficient and timely manner. At a minimum, this includes coordinating with news outlets, drafting floor plans, ordering highway signs, and drafting/preparing materials to disseminate to the public.

As public involvement activity proves to be of paramount importance to NDOR, the responsibilities continue to evolve. A wide variety of tools are utilized to inform and engage the public. "We are always looking for ways to assist in 'painting' a clearer picture of the highway improvement project for the public. Our goal is to communicate information in the best possible way to make it easier to understand what is being considered," according to Public Involvement Manager Sarah Kugler. As technology evolves, the Public Involvement team and Communication Division support staff does also.

Multi Media

Public Involvement (PI) now has an electronic presence, via the web, which continues to grow and is required by NEPA. The technological element has become a major influence in how NDOR does business. Information presented at public meetings can be found on the web afterward, including video presentations, displays and informative handouts, etc. Another service for public awareness is GovDelivery, an online tool that allows the public to subscribe to NDOR's website so they can be notified immediately following the update of a web page of their particular interest. Technology has also influenced the way the agency presents highway projects to the public at the actual events. Google Earth and 3D Modeling is used to visually show the approximate location of the proposed project, its design and physical impacts.

Citizen Oversight

In addition to monitoring and leading this focused team, Kugler also serves as the State Highway Commission Secretary. This involves not only coordinating Highway Commission meetings and events, but also working as a support team member with the Commissioners to deliver information about highway projects to the public.

The State Legislature established the Highway Commission with the primary purpose of serving as citizen oversight as well as providing public input. The Nebraska Highway Commission is composed of eight members, one from each of the eight NDOR field districts. They are appointed by the Governor for six-year terms with approval of the Legislature. The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Roads Director, but is not involved in the daily business of NDOR. The Commissioners are very active within their districts, and they make a point to attend as many local meetings/project hearings as possible. They want to give the public a voice and help collaborate with individuals, communities and the state.

To sum up the work of NDOR's Public Involvement Section, the team, with support from Communication Division staff and coordination with NDOR project delivery personnel, is constantly striving to build a strong relationship with the citizens of Nebraska. Working to provide a balanced and consistent approach, making proposed project plans and road designs available to stakeholders, interested public and community leaders, and being accessible through technology is the objective.

In the final analysis, it is the state's citizens who make Nebraska's transportation system work. NDOR pledges its continued efforts to provide a feasible, safe and efficient highway system with transparency and public involvement along the way. ♦

Meridian Bridge Story Featured by Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

The Meridian Highway Bridge between Cedar County, Nebraska, and Yankton, South Dakota, is a rare vertical lift bridge. It was converted to a pedestrian and bicycle path in 2011, and recently included in a series of "Success Stories" by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). The ACHP, an independent federal agency, promotes the preservation, enhancement, and sustainable use of the nation's diverse historic resources and advises the President and the Congress on national historic preservation policy.

The series includes prominent examples that illustrate the role of the Advisory Council in preserving historic resources and communities as the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) is set to be commemorated next year. The goal of the NHPA, which established the ACHP in 1966, is to have federal agencies act as responsible stewards of the nation's resources when their actions affect historic properties. A key responsibility of the ACHP is to administer requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA, a review process that ensures historic properties are considered during the development of any federal project.

Unique Design

The Nebraska State Historical Society's Historic Preservation Office, federal agencies and interested parties routinely consult on federal projects that involve historic properties in the state, as shown in the case study of the Meridian Highway Bridge. The bridge had its beginnings in the early 20th century. After years of relying on a ferry service or seasonally operated pontoon bridge for transportation across the Missouri River between Yankton, South Dakota, and Cedar County, Nebraska, business interests organized a private bridge company to build a permanent bridge across the Missouri River connecting Yankton with rural Cedar County.

Construction of the Meridian Highway Bridge began in 1920 and was completed in 1924. Designed as a combined railroad and highway bridge, this unusual moveable span could rise 27 feet to allow unobstructed river navigation. Recognized for its engineering and as the only vertical lift span in Nebraska and South Dakota, the Meridian Highway Bridge was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.

Historic Resource

After serving as a link between Nebraska and South Dakota for 84 years, a new bridge was necessary to replace the aging double-deck bridge. A process was initiated in accordance with the NHPA. Upon completion of the new Discovery Bridge in 2008, the Section 106 process was used by multiple government agencies – the FHWA, ACHP, South Dakota State Historical Society, Nebraska State Historical Society, City of Yankton, South Dakota Department of Transportation and Nebraska Department of Roads – to address the challenges and complete the process for conversion of the bridge to a pedestrian and bicycle path. After conversion was complete in late 2011, ownership of the Meridian Highway Bridge



Photo by Dan Luedert

The Meridian Bridge Plaza welcomes visitors to the newly renovated pedestrian bridge.

was turned over to the city of Yankton, South Dakota.

Today, the Meridian Highway Bridge is valued by the citizens of Yankton as an important historic resource saved for public enjoyment as a pedestrian bridge. It links Yankton and its waterfront park and trail system to wildlife preserves on the opposite bank of the river. The bridge will continue its historic function of connecting South Dakota and Nebraska for the public's enjoyment in the years to come. To read more about the Meridian Highway Bridge's successful conversion to a pedestrian bridge, visit: www.achp.gov/docs/Section106SuccessStory_Yankton.pdf ♦



Photo by Steve and Bobbi Olson, NDOR

The “leave-behind” device packages were used by first responders during a recent traffic incident near Palmyra.

NDOR’s “Team” Approach Offers Training to First Responders

The Nebraska Department of Roads, a member of the State Traffic Incident Management (TIM) Program Implementation Committee, began offering Train-the-Trainer courses to first responders of highway incidents in 2014.

Due to exceptional response to the program, training was extended through 2015. Nebraska is currently ranked fourth in the nation with the number of responders trained.

The trainings are an offshoot of the original TIM training program, which began in Nebraska 2012. This program is sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), who designed the course as part of the Strategic Highway Research Program (SHRP2) to improve highway safety and reduce congestion caused by accidents. The curriculum is based on extensive research conducted with TIM responders across the country and is based on a train-the-trainer approach.

The Committee, a coalition of key state and federal agencies, recognized

the importance for crash victims and passing traffic that first responders are quick and knowledgeable in their duties to prevent against potentially severe secondary collisions. It was important responding organizations – law enforcement, firefighters, state and local departments of transportation, towing companies, medical personnel, and other incident responders – were all working from the same plan.

Successful Start

In Nebraska, the first Train-the-Trainer course was held in March 2014, followed by a second course in September 2014. Seventy-three incident responders from across the state attended the free 12-hour course to become instructors. The participating Nebraska agencies that developed the training included the Department of Roads; State Patrol, EMS/Trauma Program; Fire Marshal’s Office; local police, sheriffs, fire and emergency management departments; the Local Technical Assistant Program; and the Professional Towers Association of Nebraska.

Building upon that success, in 2015 two more Train-the-Trainer sessions were conducted, the first in May at the Nebraska Fire School in Grand Island, and the second in June, in conjunction with the Great Omaha Responder Training Initiative, with the goal of eventually training 2,000 responders in the Omaha metro area.

As part of the 12-hour training, participants completing the course receive training aids developed by NDOR for use in training and tabletop exercises. The instructor’s packets include two-dimensional tabletop setups, a flash drive with a four-hour Nebraska-specific PowerPoint presentation, a copy of the Emergency Response Guide (ERG), the Nebraska 2013 Traffic Crash Facts booklet, copies of Nebraska laws discussed during the class, and copies of other related materials. The instructors also receive three maps to use in tabletop exercises. Upon completion of the course, the new TIM trainers return to their communities to conduct free four-hour training courses to cascade

(see **TIM Training** on next page)

TIM Training (cont'd. from page 7)

the training and make it available to all responders.

Innovative Approach

Taking an innovative approach to encourage participation in the program, NDOR has used Highway Safety Improvement Program funding to provide participating organizations with tools they need to manage incident sites. Those with at least six members attending the four-hour TIM training course receive device packages worth \$600. The package includes two roll-up 48-inch fluorescent pink EMERGENCY SCENE AHEAD warning signs with stands, five 28-inch collapsible traffic cones, and six Class 2 safety vests. The traffic control devices provided in the device kits are very effective in enhancing the visibility of incident scenes and in improving the safety of roadway users and responders.

Local fire departments comprise the majority of the program participants. Of the 478 fire departments with 13,780 firefighters providing vital services to the citizens of Nebraska,

most are from sparsely populated areas and have very limited funding to purchase these items on their own. There have been 150 departments who have qualified to receive device packages.

This successful innovation by NDOR in creating these “leave-behind” packages has resulted in interest by other states to incorporate this in their Train-the-Trainer programs. NDOR has submitted the Traffic Control Device Packages and TIM training for a national award.

Response to the program has continued to be impressive. As of July 13, 2015, the program has trained over 4,473 of the 17,100 first responders providing vital services to the citizens of Nebraska. Many larger departments have recognized the value of the training and are requiring each of their members to attend the four-hour training.

The Train-the-Trainer course will continue to be scheduled upon request. Additional four-hour TIM classes are being requested and will be held in locations across the state. ♦



Photo by Mark Meints, NDOR

“Leave-behind” device packages, worth \$600, are provided to participants of the TIM training program. The packages include traffic control devices to enhance the visibility of incident scenes and improve the safety of roadway users and responders.

New NDOR Website Launched

The Communication Division is excited to announce the launch of the new NDOR website, which can be found at roads.nebraska.gov. Over the next few months you will see the website expand as team members continue to transition content from the current website to the new site.

The first step the web team took in order to redesign and re-concept the public website was to define its mission—“To provide timely, accurate and organized transportation information that encourages public interaction with the Department of Roads.” This mission highlights the main goals of the website: making it as easily

accessible to the public as possible.

The team also met with each division to gather input and examine content to determine its placement and necessity.

Important features include:

- A modern and clean design consistent throughout the website. This has been accomplished by having a header, footer and new color scheme all consistently carried throughout the entire site.
- Simple navigation that is easily understood by the public. There are five main categories which most all of the website’s content will be found under—Travel, Business Center, Projects, News and Media, and Safety. There is also an

“About” section located in the header where information about NDOR and careers can be found, as well as a “Contact Us” page.

- Accessibility. One of the most important aspects of the new website is its compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. The website is designed to be responsive, meaning that no matter what size or type of device a user has (laptop, tablet, mobile phone, etc.), the website will resize and display the content for them correctly.

Users are invited to leave feedback on the website by using the orange “Feedback” button on the right-hand side of the website. ♦



Photo by Dan Luedert

Leadership Development Program Graduates Recognized

Fifty-three graduates of NDOR's Leadership Development Program received certificates of completion from Director Kyle Schneweis during ceremonies held on July 29 in the NDOR Central Headquarters Auditorium.

Graduates met the recommended criteria for completing one of three certificate levels over the required 18-month time period, which ran from January 2014 through July 2015. The certificate levels included Manager Readiness, Level 1; Manager Effectiveness, Level 2; and Manager Proficiency, Level 3.

These NDOR employees are the first to graduate from the program since it was revamped in 2013 to be a manager-driven program, with individuals selected by Division Heads and District Engineers from their area for each of the first three

certificate levels. Participants in the newest level, "Manager Maturity," are nominated by Division Heads and District Engineers and endorsed by the Director's Office. The purpose of the Leadership Development Program is to build the strength of current and future supervisors and managers through training and development so that they can continue to be leaders of the Nebraska Department of Roads.

The first level, Manager Readiness, is for individuals working to become a supervisor within the next year - entry-level supervisors and first-level supervisors. Twenty-three NDOR employees received their certificates of completion.

The second level, Manager Effectiveness, is for individuals with two or more years of supervisory experience. They may still be in a front-line supervisory position, or second-level supervisory position.

Seventeen NDOR employees received their certificates of completion in this category.

The third level, Manager Proficiency, is for individuals with four or more years of supervisory/manager experience. They have served in multiple supervisory positions within NDOR and/or other organizations and are currently in mid-level manager positions. Twelve NDOR employees received certificates of completion in Manager Proficiency.

The fourth level, Manager Maturity, is for advanced level supervisors and managers - section heads, existing division heads and district engineers.

During ceremonies, Director Schneweis thanked program graduates for their efforts to become better leaders and for their dedication in completing their designated program level. He challenged them to

(see Leadership on next page)

Leadership *(cont'd. from page 9)*

put the lessons they learned into practice and to continue their quest to further develop leadership skills for the benefit of their teams and the Nebraska Department of Roads.

The NDOR Leadership Development Program will resume January 2016 and run through June 2017. For additional information regarding the program, please review the Leadership Development Program Guide found on the HR Workforce Development webpage of the Intranet, or contact Travis Haberman with the HR Workforce Development Team. ♦

Leadership Development Program Graduates

Mgr. Readiness (L1)

Mgr. Effectiveness (L2)
Mgr. Proficiency (L3)

Bridge

Jared Ashton (L1)
Jesse Sire (L1)
Jamie Reinke (L2)
Lynden Vanderveen (L3)

Business Tech. Support

Bradley Hicken (L1)
Robert Wilkinson (L1)
Mark Neemann (L2)
Thomas Sawyer (L2)
Patrick Costello (L3)
Lou Anne Daugherty (L3)

Construction

Lucinda Dowding (L1)
Jaimie Kamarad (L1)
Ryan McKay (L2)
Michelle Weigel (L2)

Controller

Erin Stoddard (L1)
Kathy Peterson (L2)
Rita Shaw (L2)
Rebecca Fleming (L3)

Director's Office

Erich Strack (L1)

Human Resources

Chris Hassler (L1)
Geraldine Waechter (L1)
Jenifer Lautenschlager-Dohman (L2)
Travis Haberman (L3)

Materials & Research

River Hwang (L1)
Jeffrey Soula (L1)
Derek Adkins (L2)
Bruce Barrett (L2)
Matthew Beran (L3)

Operations

Kevin Briggs (L1)
Tyler Helgoth (L1)
Matthew Baker (L2)
Michael Mattison (L3)

Planning & Project Development

Todd Hill (L1)
Gabe Robertson (L1)
Stephen Stroud (L2)
Bradley Zumwalt (L2)

Program Management

Paul Fintel (L1)
Michael Beattie (L2)
Kendall Tonjes (L3)

Rail & Public Transportation

Todd Palmer (L1)
Kari Ruse (L3)

Right-of-Way

Andre Sahele (L1)
Roxanne Sullivan (L1)
Greg Weinert (L1)
Mark Beethe (L2)
Timothy Mullin (L3)

Roadway Design

Kyle Keller (L1)
Chris Lutz (L2)
Nathan Sorben (L2)
Jodi Kocher (L3)

Traffic Engineering

Sean Owings (L1)
Barbara Olson (L2)
Alan Swanson (L3)



Charitable Giving Kick-Off Receives Rave Reviews

As NDOR Director Kyle Schneweis issued his charitable giving challenge to NDOR employees during the campaign kick-off August 3 in the "backyard" of the central headquarters building in Lincoln, he had an attentive audience, including his wife, Laurel, and sons, Mazlo and Karver. A devoted Kansas Jayhawk, Director Kyle said he will wear his Husker shirt every football Friday this fall if 2015 pledges and contributions exceed last year's.

In addition to Kyle's challenge, NDOR employees heard remarks from Walter Powell, Coordinator of the Lincoln TeamMates Mentoring Program, and Starlet Borecky, Assistant Director of Resource Development for United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County, as everyone enjoyed coffee cake and refreshments provided by their fellow employees. The 2015 Nebraska State Employee Charitable Giving Campaign continues through August 28. ♦



Photo by Dan Luedert



Highway Beautification Act Marks 50 Years

By Jean Todd
Right-of-Way Division

October 22 will mark the 50th anniversary of the Highway Beautification Act, which became law during President Lyndon B. Johnson's term in office. This is commonly referred to as "The Lady Bird Johnson Act" in reference to the president's wife and her efforts towards planting flowers and removing billboards and junkyards visible from the nation's highways.

Prior to the program becoming law, the first section set forth the basic program objectives: "The erection and maintenance of outdoor advertising signs, displays and devices in areas adjacent to the Interstate system and the primary system should be controlled in order to protect the public investment in such highways, to promote the safety and recreational value of public travel, and to preserve natural beauty." All of this regulation pertains to signs located off of any roadway right-of-way and on private property.

Bonus Program

The initial attempt at controlling outdoor advertising, aka billboards, was enacted in 1958. That act provided that states which voluntarily agreed to control outdoor advertising adjacent to Interstate highways would receive a "bonus" of one-half of one percent of the highway's cost of construction. A total of 23 states, including Nebraska, participated in the bonus program.

Control of this advertising initially regulated signs within 660 feet of the Interstate system. Only certain directional, official, or on-premise signs were allowed in this area. This regulation resulted in the placement of "jumbo" billboards beyond the designated area. Ultimately the regulation of advertising signs was changed to include not only those adjacent to the Interstate, but adjacent to routes designated as primary and national highway system routes. Also, the regulation extended beyond 660 feet to include those visible from these "control routes."

State Laws

Today, all states must provide continuing "effective control" of outdoor advertising or be subject to a loss of 10 percent of their federal-aid highway funds. The states have established control procedures, usually through sign permit systems, inventories and periodic surveillance of the controlled routes, in order to discover illegal signs and monitor other signs and areas controlled by the Act. All states are required to take action under the provisions of their state laws to have any illegal signs expeditiously removed.

Since the inception of this program, at least 45,000 illegal signs have been removed throughout Nebraska. Currently there are approximately 5,000 legally permitted signs; almost one-half of those are Class III Signs, aka billboards, with the



Photo by Dan Luedert

A cactus flower blossoms along Highway 23 between Eustis and Elwood.

other half falling under the other seven classifications of advertising signs which also require sign permits from NDOR.

The Highway Beautification Section in the Right-of-Way Division is responsible for overseeing this program. Jean Todd, Highway Beautification Supervisor, and Nicolette "Nicki" Klein, Right-of-Way Associate II, work full time with this regulation. There are eight District Permit Officers who spend a portion of their days performing ongoing surveillance, answering questions, and reviewing new applications for any new sign permits. The Permit Officers are: Keith Kohel, District 1; JoEllen Edgington, District 2; Dean Schwartz, District 3; Frank Stepanek, District 4; Melissa Lally, District 5; Jim Morphey, District 6; Devlin Reece, District 7 and Jim Baker, District 8.

Additional information on this program can be found on the NDOR website: www.transportation.nebraska.gov/roway/permits-adv.htm. ♦

“TRAC & RIDES” Education Program Expanding in Nebraska

By Karen Mosier
Human Resources Division

The “TRAC & RIDES” program, sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), is expanding in Nebraska. The curriculum/materials-based, multi-faceted program is designed to instruct and promote skills and talents essential to the transportation industry within the elementary and middle/high school setting.



“TRAC PAC” kits, designed for middle/high school-level students, are available in training/teaching modules that include materials and curriculum guidance for the following topics:

- Bridge Builder
- SimCity City Planning
- Roadway Design and Construction
- Highway Development and the Environment
- Highway Safety
- Magnetic Levitation
- Motion and the Transportation Engineer
- Traffic Technology

The “RIDES” trunk, designed for K-8 students, is filled with supplies to help students understand and demonstrate the basic fundamentals of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) by conducting a range of experiments, charting and analyzing data, and determining solutions for a variety of concepts.

The TRAC & RIDES program began in Nebraska in the fall of 2014, when Carrie Williams, NDOR Human Resources Manager, presented the program and materials at the Nebraska Association of Teachers of Science (NATS) Conference at Calvin Crest near Fremont,

Nebraska. During the conference and shortly thereafter, schools requested and were provided materials according to their grade levels and emphasis. To date, \$28,521.33 has been used to fund kits to the following schools:

TRAC: (geared toward middle/high school students)

- O'Neill Junior/Senior High School
- Milford High School
- Dorchester Public Schools
- Columbus High School
- Pleasanton Public Schools

RIDES: (geared toward elementary students)

- Morton Elementary/Hastings
- Pleasanton Public Schools
- McPhee Elementary/Lincoln
- Minne Lusa Elementary/Omaha

The TRAC & RIDES 2015/2016 program is undergoing some changes. This year, NDOR staff will provide information to all interested schools at the NATS Conference on September 24-26, 2015. School principals/administrators will be asked to commit participating teachers' time to attend training prior to delivery of TRAC & RIDES materials to jump-start schools' participation and facilitate greater usage of the curriculum.

The signed agreement will help ensure that teachers are allowed to attend training, raising the level of engagement and application of the materials in the classroom setting, which is the overall goal of the program. It also serves as notice to administrators of curriculum and materials that can truly enhance/elevate math and science programs to a higher level.

NDOR has authorized funds for the purchase of kits and refills for the 2015-2016 school year. The department is committed to providing materials to schools that are actively engaged in STEM education in an effort to plant the seeds of the future of transportation in Nebraska. ♦

We Get Mail...

June 30, 2015

I want to express my gratitude and appreciation for three men who work for NDOR. Lance Bartels from Chappell, Bob Mills and John Saxton both from Gordon. The morning of June 8, I was traveling to Kearney for a science conference. About 10 miles south of Rushville on Hwy. 250, I drifted off the right side of the road, over-corrected, returning to the highway and my vehicle rolled. Luckily, my car landed on its wheels and I was able to get out. Moments later an NDOR truck as well as a pickup stopped. They rushed over to help me and realized there was a significant amount of smoke coming from under the hood. They helped me to the highway and shortly after the engine ignited with large flames. One of them rushed down with a fire extinguisher while the other helped me into the pickup. They took care of me, tried to help save the car, called in to have someone contact my husband and called the rescue unit. I am so thankful for their quick response and care. I can't imagine what could have happened if they weren't there to respond so quickly. The car was a total loss, but luckily I sustained only minor injuries, cuts, bruises and a concussion. I also lost all my belongings in the fire, and while I was upset because of that, I was reminded that "you're not in there, it's just stuff."

Again, I just want to express my gratitude and appreciation.

*Shannon Shuck
Chadron, Nebraska*

Editor's Note: Bob Mills is the Hwy. Maintenance Supervisor and John Saxton is a Hwy. Maintenance Worker Sr., both at District 5 in Gordon. Lance Bartels is a Hwy. Maintenance Worker Sr. in Chappell.

The Department of Roads receives numerous complimentary letters. The letters printed here are representative of those often sent praising the many fine and deserving employees of the Department of Roads.

August 5, 2015

As we were traveling home to Iowa on Hwy. 20 east of Ainsworth, we experienced a flat tire on our camper. One of your men stopped right away to see if we needed help, but we told him we had everything we needed. As luck would have it, we ended up having difficulty with the jack. The man stopped again and began to slow traffic as we were being pelted with pea gravel. Another of your men stopped and saw the need for a larger jack, which he had, and he helped my husband get the tire changed. What a godsend they both were. Their names are Justin and Butch. Please thank them again for their kindness and service to the public. They are a very positive example of your state.

Rev Don & Cheryl Williams

Editor's Note: Justin Ludemann is a Hwy. Maintenance Supervisor in Ainsworth, and Butch Cheatum is a Hwy. Maintenance Worker Sr. in Springview, both at District 8.

August 11, 2015

Dear Mr. Kovar and Mr. Fagerland,

I want to let you know how appreciative I am of the fine highway workers I encountered on a recent drive through your district. On August 5th, while on a motorcycle trip with my wife and another couple, we slowed down for a flagger south of Valentine and I got a flat tire.

As we worked to plug the tire on the shoulder, the flagger walked down to check on us. The gentleman's name escapes me, but after learning of our dilemma and offering great advice, he contacted your mechanic, "Blue," who came out from the shop with a tank of air.

Your crew went well above their duties and job expectations. They extended their helping hands to make this traveller feel much better. Their friendliness and genuine caring attitude was of great comfort at the time. As a retired Minnesota Sheriff and current County Commissioner, I hope that our employees in Benton County have that same level of compassion.

Thanks again to you and your whole staff. To act as they did, they surely learned examples from the top. Tell "Blue" I will indeed pay it forward.

*Jim McMahon
Sauk Rapids, Minnesota*

Editor's Note: Rob Norton aka "Blue" is an Auto/Diesel Mechanic at District 8 in Valentine.

All in the Family

Information for "All in the Family" should be sent to the Communication Division. Appropriate information will be included in future Roadrunners.

Please note: Birth announcements will be published as long as written permission is received by the Communication Division. This is necessary, as NDOR is required to adhere to privacy laws under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Births

Congratulations to Bobbi and Steve Olson on the birth of their twin grandsons, Isaac Henry and Ezekiel Steven, born July 1. Bobbi is a Federal Aid Administrator in Traffic Engineering and Steve is an ITS Project Coordinator in Operations.

Congratulations to Bob and Mallory Seger on the birth of their son, Ben Allan, born June 16. Bob is a Chemist II in Materials & Research.

Congratulations to Jason and Heather Rotter on the birth of their son, Matthew James, born July 23. Jason is the Assistant District Construction Engineer in District 4 at Grand Island.

Congratulations to Mason Watson and Sarah Smith on the birth of their son Henry Wallace, born July 22. Mason is a Hwy. Construction Tech II at District 6 in North Platte.

Condolences

Condolences to Bobbi and Steve Olson on the passing of Bobbi's father. Bobbi is a Federal Aid Administrator in Traffic Engineering and Steve is an ITS Project Coordinator in Operations.

Condolences to Tom Sawyer on the passing of his mother. Tom is IT Supervisor in Business Technology Support.

Condolences to David Brokaw on the passing of his mother. Dave is a Hwy. Materials & Tests Manager in Materials & Research.

Condolences to Brandon Remm on the passing of his father. Brandon is a Hwy. Construction Tech III at District 3 in Norfolk.

Condolences to Ronda Lewis and Michelle & Jeremy Weigel on the loss of their mother-in-law/grandmother on June 3. Ronda is an IT Infrastructure Support Analyst Sr. at District 6 in North Platte, Michelle is a Highway Contracts Supervisor in Construction and Jeremy is a Highway Quality Assurance Manager in Materials & Research.

Condolences to the family of Lance Wallin, retired Hwy. Construction Tech II at District 6 in North Platte. Lance passed away on June 16.

Condolences to Brock and Laressa Swedberg on the loss of their daughter, Olivia, on June 30. Brock is a Hwy. Maintenance Worker Sr. at District 6 in North Platte.

Weddings

Betty Schneider is happy to announce the marriage of her granddaughter, Melissa Brady, to Hans Harnisch. They were married on June 27 in Lincoln. Betty is an Office Clerk III in Right-of-Way.

This 'n That

Congratulations to Jan Kollars on her retirement after 16 years of service. Jan was a Hwy. Design Tech I in Right-of-Way.

Congratulations to Eileen O'Keefe on her retirement after 20 years of service. Eileen was a Hwy. ROW Designer III in Right-of-Way.

Congratulations to Lonnie Huebert on his retirement after 44 years of service. Lonnie was an Engineer IV in Roadway Design.

Congratulations to Sandra Schuelke on her retirement after 25 years of service. Sandra was an Administrative Assistant I in Roadway Design.

Congratulations to Kathy Largent on her retirement after more than 48 years of service. Kathy was an IT Supervisor in Business Technology Support.

Congratulations to Dave Venema on his retirement after more than 38 years of service. Dave was a Hwy. Design Tech. II in Traffic Engineering.

Verneda Kelly was ordained as an Episcopal Priest by Bishop Scott Barker, at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Seward, NE on August 5th. She will serve as a bi-vocational priest at the church in Seward as she continues to work in the Director's office at NDOR's Central Headquarters.

Dylan Woodgate completed his senior year of American Legion Baseball in St. Paul. He led the senior pitching staff setting two Post 119 records and was also selected to participate in the Mid-Nebraska League All Star Game for the second year in a row. He was a recipient of the Jim Hurlbert Memorial Baseball Scholarship from the Nebraska American Legion and will continue his baseball career at Doane College. Dylan is the son of Jerry and Michelle Woodgate. Jerry is a Project Manager at District 4 in St. Paul.

Mattie Lentz has accepted a full ride athletic scholarship to play softball at Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton, OK. She graduated from Lincoln Southwest High School in May. Mattie is the daughter of Tim Lentz, Appraiser III in Right-of-Way.

Service Awards

Congratulations to these dedicated individuals for their work and continued service with the Department of Roads. They celebrate their service dates in *August and September 2015*.

50 Years

Thomas Rohn, Roadway Design

40 Years

Scott Brummond, District 3

Patricia Brunken, Roadway Design

Daryl Lutes, District 4

Bruce Ramsey, Materials & Research

Michael Rudnick, District 8

30 Years

Richard Landgren Jr., District 5

Kerry Scott, District 7

Kirk Strong, District 2

20 Years

Gary Hibberd, District 4

Ed Kelley, Materials & Research

Raymond Mora, District 4

Gretchen Mueller-Neeman, Right-of-Way

Charles Osborn, District 8

Robert Sittre, District 8

Chad Stetson, District 5

10 Years

Daniel Beddoe, District 4

Terry Frank, District 1

Zachary Heller, District 3

Scott Kowalski, District 4

Michael Morgan, District 3

Eric Nielsen, District 4

Marsha Sand, Controller

Jennifer Tyser, BTSD



NDOR Events Calendar

— August —

- 3-9 National Stop on Red Week**
www.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersection/redlight/outreach/tenacts.cfm
- 12 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628
- 8/21 – 9/7 “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over”
National Enforcement Crackdown**
www.nhtsa.gov/StopImpairedDriving
- 18 Blood Drive – Community Blood Bank**
NDOR Central Headquarters
Contact Diane Holthus @ 402-479-4580
- 21 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**
10:00 a.m., NDOR Matrls. & Research Conference Rm. 129
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436
- 26 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628
- 28 Hwy. Commission Meeting/
District 6 Program Hearing**
8:30 a.m., Holiday Inn Express & Suites North Platte
300 Holiday Frontage Rd., North Platte, NE
Contact Sarah Kugler @ 402-479-4871

— September —

- 1 New Employee Orientation Program**
NDOR Auditorium
Contact Denice Sears @ 402-479-3656
- 3 Letting**
1:30 p.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact Kendall Stege @ 402-479-4528
- 7 State Holiday – Labor Day**
- 9 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., NDOR Matrls. & Research Conference Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628
- 11 Patriot Day**
- 13 - 19 Child Passenger Safety Week**
- 19 National Seat Check Saturday**
www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/cps
- 23 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628
- 25 Hwy. Commission Meeting**
8:30 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Sarah Kugler @ 402-479-4871
- 25 Bd. Public Roads Class. & Stds.**
9:00 a.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436

— October —

- 2 Bd. Examiners for Co. Hwy. & City Street Supts.**
Meeting: 8:45 a.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Exam: 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436
- 5 - 9 Drive Safely Work Week**
www.trafficsafety.org/drivesafelyworkweek/
- 7 National Walk to School Day**
www.walkbiketoschool.org
- 6 - 8 Operations & Maintenance Conference**
Marina Inn & Conference Center, South Sioux City
- 8 Letting**
1:30 p.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact Kendall Stege @ 402-479-4528
- 12 State Holiday – Columbus Day**
- 14 Blood Drive – Community Blood Bank**
NDOR Central Headquarters
Contact Diane Holthus @ 402-479-4580
- 14 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628
- 16 Bd. Public Roads Class. & Stds.**
9:00 a.m., NDOR Auditorium
Contact LeMoyne Schulz @ 402-479-4436
- 19 - 23 National School Bus Safety Week**
www.napt.org
- 23 Hwy. Commission Meeting/
District 2 Program Hearing**
8:30 a.m., Aksarben Suites Omaha
7270 Cedar Street, Omaha, NE
Contact Sarah Kugler @ 402-479-4871
- 19 - 25 National Teen Driver Safety Week**
www.teendriversource.org
- 28 RoadToasters**
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m., Hwy. Commission Meeting Rm.
Contact Glenn Williams @ 402-479-3628

If you would like a key event included on upcoming calendars, call the Communication Office 479-4512 or e-mail linda.wilson@nebraska.gov. Information for the October/November Roadrunner should be received by September 30, 2015.